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# A JOURNEY

ON THE

*BERBICE RIVER AND WIEROONIE CREEK,*

BY

ERNEST H. GLAISHER, B.A.,

*Curator of the British Guiana Museum.*

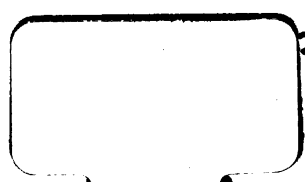
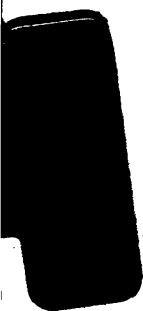
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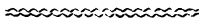
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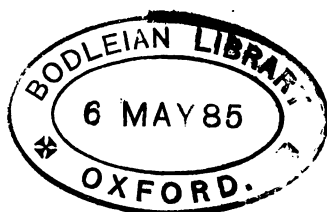
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**NOTE:**

*The following Journal, which is a narrative of an expedition made on the Berbice River and Wieroonie Creek during the months of October and November, 1884, was originally intended to be placed before the Directors of the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society in the form of a Report. In writing the notes out for publication the account became so extended that the Author thought he would probably anticipate the wishes of the Directors by putting them into their present shape.*

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## *The Berbice River in 1884.*

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### PART I.

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**O**N the 6th October, 1884, I started from Georgetown for a two months' natural history expedition on the River Berbice and its tributaries. Chiefly having in view the following objects, viz.: to obtain information of the fauna in the neighbourhood of the falls, and to make journeys into the interior of the country away from the river banks for the purpose of gaining some fresh knowledge about this part of the colony which at present is almost a terra incognita.

On the evening of the 7th I arrived at plantation *Friendship*, where the river steamer anchors for the night, and on the following day started to go higher up taking with me three Arawak Indians, who had been procured by Mr. PATOIR to form part of the crew for my expedition. I had secured the services of Mr. BARNARD LEPS, a well known resident of the river and a first rate bird-stuffer, whose duties were to accompany me as captain and to give me assistance in the procuring and skinning natural history specimens; it was indeed a disappointment when he told me, almost at the last moment, that it would be impossible for him to travel in consequence of the sudden sickness of one of his relatives. In his place I afterwards engaged Mr.

EDWARD PATOIR the son of my host at Pln. *Friendship* who undertook to act as captain and perform all the necessary skinning work. As the steamer passed Zeelandia I was joined by Mr. J. W. GLADSTONE who was of the greatest service to me, and who did his best, in the face of considerable difficulties, to enable me to make a satisfactory start on the expedition. At Maria Henrietta, where Mr. GLADSTONE has a large house, I landed with the three Indians, my captain remaining on the steamer with the stores in order to take them to Koomaka Downs, where he had instructions to procure more hands. At Pln. *Landsgroom*, opposite to Maria Henrietta, I expected to obtain the boat that had kindly been placed at my disposal by the river Magistrate, Mr. CALDER; this boat to my great disappointment I found almost in pieces and quite unfit for such an expedition as I proposed taking, it had been placed by the owner in charge of a Portuguese shopkeeper who had allowed it to become almost a total wreck. I at once made enquiries about obtaining another boat and luckily remembered seeing, as we passed the mouth of the Wieroonie creek, a large keelless plank boat which seemed suitable for my purpose. I immediately sent down my three men to make inquiries about it, in the evening they returned, bringing the boat with them, and as the hire of it was reasonable and it seemed in fair condition I engaged it for the journey.

The next day with the new boat I started to Koomaka Downs, where we arrived after a three hours' heavy pull against the tide. Between this place and Maria Henrietta the river is exceedingly populous and it was with surprise that I saw the number of benabs and dwelling houses situated on its banks. Close to the water's edge the wild cocoa

grows in great profusion and was to be obtained in all stages of development from the bud to the ripe fruit.

The settlement at Koomaka Downs (the name Koomaka is Indian for "silk-cotton", an enormous specimen of which tree is growing in the midst of the village) is very prettily situated at the foot of some wooded downs, it consists of about six or eight houses which are rather widely scattered and inhabited chiefly by Indians and half-castes; the houses as a rule are large and clean, one of them having a wooden flooring. In the midst of the settlement is situated a large well built church connected with the Church of England; service I am told is held there about once a month. At the back of the village are a great number of very large cocoa trees which are the remains of an old Dutch cocoa estate, and I was told that the pods are collected and sold, the proceeds being kept for the benefit of the settlement Church. Behind the downs above mentioned is the large savannah which lies between this river and the Demerara River, across which are numerous paths. On the banks of the river opposite to Koomaka are several smaller settlements, and also a thriving shop belonging to an old Portuguese settler.

On landing I found that my captain had placed all the stores in a large benab belonging to a man named PORTER who was lolling in his hammock suffering from a bad attack of sore eyes. Here I wished to procure only two hands but unfortunately the good men were either sick with sore eyes or away hunting. A Piwarrie feast on a large scale was to be held the following night at a settlement on the opposite bank of the river, and I was well aware that if I did not obtain hands and commence my journey

before this event it would be impossible to make a move for at least four days. Next morning after a good deal of trouble and worry I obtained through the kindness of old GONSALVES, the Portuguese trader, two fairly good men, and now having enough hands to make a start I had a tent constructed from palm leaves over the large batteau; in this boat I placed the square boxes, the round barrels going long-wise in the body of a large canoe which I obtained from Mr. GLADSTONE. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon we started, the boat towing the canoe. The object I had in view this day was only to travel so far that it would be impossible for the men to return to Koomaka and to join the feast that was to take place that night. At 4.30 we stopped for the night at the house of ROBERT, an Arawak Indian, who lived almost opposite the mouth of the Ituni creek; his house was certainly about the cleanest and neatest one I have seen, it consisted of one large open room, the thatches coming so low down that it was necessary to stoop on entering, there was also another large room quite enclosed with palings and entered by a door, this second room, which was also very clean, was used as the kitchen. ROBERT himself is a very civil fellow but is feared by the superstitious Arawaks of the river who say that he has "lately been studying magic;" he gains his living by cultivating a field in which he grows yams, corn, cassava and plantain.

The next day we started early with a strong tide against us so that at first our progress was very slow. After some time we passed the mouth of a fine creek called Pawye, which has a branch called the Psari creek; in this creek is situated a very valuable timber grant owned

by Mr. DAVSON of Berbice, on which I was told both greenheart and bullet tree had been worked from 15 to 20 years. On several different occasions whilst I was on the river I saw loads of remarkably fine timber floating to New Amsterdam which I was told was cut on Mr. DAVSON'S grant.

The river now is most beautifully wooded, the traces of Dutch cultivation fast disappearing. In the afternoon we passed the mouth of a very celebrated creek called the Kibiri-biri creek. It was here in the old times that the Dutch colonists came from Fort Nassau to recruit their health; a visit of a few weeks to some settlement upon the banks of this creek being considered to be nearly as effectual for renovating Europeans worn out by a tropical climate as a journey back to Europe. The water is very cold and clear, and evidently must come for the most part from the large savannah which is situated between the Berbice and Demerara Rivers. The custom of visiting the cold creeks has quite fallen into abeyance, but if the virtues that were attributed to them are true it might with advantage be resumed, for they are now exceedingly easy of access due to the facilities afforded by the frequent trips of the Colonial Steamer. To travel up them it would be necessary to cut away the *tacubas* (trees which have fallen across the channel) which greatly obstruct the passage.

A little higher up we passed the benab of a Corsican settler named Polité; in the lower part of the river I had heard much about the courtesy and kindness of this settler to travellers and it was my intention to stop here for the night; unfortunately he was away from home, so we pushed on and just as darkness overtook us we landed at a small Arawak settlement called Wockra Mucco.



We found this settlement deserted with the exception of one man who was to all intents and purposes an Indian but plainly showed that he had black blood in him by his very large bush of black hair. The place was dirty and ill kept, and was guarded by a herd of half starved wretched looking dogs which were a great nuisance from the incessant noise they made.

At this part of the journey the Arawaks I had with me began to show considerable anxiety at our approach to the Ackawoi settlement, which is situated a few days higher up at Kabbakabouri. The Arawaks have a deep seated fear of the Ackawois; they state and really firmly believe that an Ackawoi can mesmerise any person by his mere look, so that weapons are of no avail for defense against their attack, and that an Ackawoi man has power to change himself into the form of an animal and can thus make his escape if hard pressed. A deeply rooted tradition exists on this river, believed firmly by both creoles and Indians, that if a man wishes to be revenged on some other person he employs an Ackawoi Indian to kill him. The Ackawoi meets his employer at some pre-arranged spot and has his victim pointed out, the Indian now watches the habits of the man for several days and after making himself well acquainted with them returns to his employer stating that he is prepared to kill the man. Half pay is then given to the Indian who does not return until his victim is slain; he then receives the remainder of his pay, pulls up his woodskin in the night from the bed of the river and returns to his camp. This, which is really nothing more in the present age than a mere superstition, is believed from one end of the river to the other. Although I continually asked I could hear of no satisfac-

tory case, but all bodies that happen to be met with in the bush are at once put down to the doings of the Ackawoi Indians.

The conversation throughout the camp this night was entirely about the Ackawois, and William, the Indian at the settlement was full of stories illustrating the tradition, which did a great deal of harm to my men by augmenting the fear that they already had.

At 3 o'clock next morning we started in order to make the most of the tide, and journeyed for some time in the moonlight, the river was bitterly cold and I could scarcely keep warm under blankets in consequence of the penetrating character of a white mist which crept in everywhere. The vegetation on each side of the river was as yet unchanged and the wild cocoa was still to be met with growing profusely along the banks. The whole of the journey up to now had been made in deep water and as far as we had yet gone large ocean ships could have sailed, the average depth of the water being, I was told, 20 to 40 feet. About 10 o'clock in the morning we arrived at a large Indian Settlement called Ahwie-emah, which is pleasantly situated on a hill about half a mile from the bank of the river, it consisted of about five or six large houses inhabited by ten men with their wives and children. This day being Sunday everybody had put on clean clothes and spent the afternoon drinking Piwarrie, not in the large cups used in the feasts but in the smaller vessels about the size and shape of a finger basin.

I asked them how it was made here and the following receipt was given to me:—"Boil together an equal quantity of water and half ripe cassareep; bake thick lumps of cassava until it is properly burnt, break this cassava

and put it in a pail (The women always chew the cassava, although my informant neglected to tell me of this.) Over this cassava pour the hot water and cassareep, let the mixture stand for two days, strain it and put it in jugs, after three days it foams out of the mouth of the jar and is ready for drinking."

This settlement is terribly infested with blood-sucking bats, and the night we slept no less than three men and two children were badly bitten, one poor child had two large gaping wounds on his toes his feet being covered with running blood. The people here, while they complain greatly of the attack of bats, do not take the least precautions against them; it never occurs to them to make the slightest possible netting of tibirri and place it round their hammocks which would be a perfectly effectual protection against the bats. One poor child was pointed out to me as being a special victim of bats, he was merely skin and bone, which, I was told, was entirely due to bat-sucking. I have no reason to disbelieve it after the large quantity of blood which flowed from some of the wounds. My blanket has always been a sufficient protection to myself against these creatures.

In the morning we started about 11 o'clock, and a change in the character of the river was soon apparent. The water was fast becoming shallow, and long trunks of trees stretched themselves out into the stream, remaining where they had fallen, the river not being deep enough to cover them. At 12 o'clock we passed the mouth of a small creek called Harridan, and a little way above this we ran aground for the first time. The mucco-mucco plants now stood out in large patches far into the river, previously they had only been in a thin line along either bank; grassy patches of shore were

apparent here and there, and the smallness of the forest trees denoted the presence of extensive marshes on either side of the river. The Awarraballi palm which previously had only been seen very sparsely now became exceedingly common; it has long prickles on its trunk, and grows in a very similar manner to the well-known Æta palm. At this part of the river great trouble was experienced with the canoe which let in water as fast as it could be baled out; this boat turned out to be anything but serviceable being full of cracks which had been badly stopped up with oakum and tar, and the whole time I used it, was a continual source of anxiety and inconvenience to me. Animals, birds, insects, etc. were much more numerous, and I should have liked to have stopped a little time here in order to do some collecting work. We camped early at the mouth of a small creek, in which throughout the night fishes were heard jumping in great numbers. In early morning I was aroused by the noise of a very large snake, probably a water-camoudi, passing close to the camp, and making a loud rustling over the dry leaves, after this sleep was nearly impossible, due to the melancholy wail of a troupe of howling monkeys (*My-cetis seniculus*) which were roaming from tree to tree in our immediate neighbourhood.

When we started, all attempt at using either oars or paddles was given up; each man now cut good substantial poles from the bush, and we continued the journey pushing our boat along by means of them; the river in places became very narrow, and shortly after starting we passed the first island separated from the main land by only a narrow channel. Islands now became common, and after passing the third at 10 o'clock we came in sight of a white ridge about 100 feet high which

descended nearly precipitously to the river bank ; this place is called the White hill. From the top of this ridge the view is superb, and I should say nearly the finest in the colony, the river flows at its foot in a north-easterly direction, and looking beyond the opposite shore, nothing but endless bush is to be seen. On the east the view is bounded by a low ridge of hills which trend apparently from north to south, but not the slightest trace is to be seen of any open spot or savannah land nor sign of the river Corentyn which cannot be more than 20 miles distant. I rather inferred from looking at this prospect that the low range of hills before spoken of separated the Corentyn from the Berbice water-shed. The ridge on which we stood is composed of white sand, and descends to the river at a steeper angle than 45 deg. On its slippery sides grow some low bushy plants which are of the greatest use for holding on to when ascending ; and it is as well to be careful of a species of sand wasp rather more than an inch long which makes numerous little holes in places ; these insects buzz around in a threatening manner when their nests are destroyed.

Judging from the sandy soil and the scrubbiness of the low vegetation that grew on the top of the ridge I thought that the large savannah which lies between the Demerara and Berbice River could not be distant, and in this I was not mistaken, for after a quarter of an hour's walk through this low bush we entered the open savannah. This portion of it is I think called the You-a-courie savannah from the creek of this name which takes its rise in it and enters the Berbice river a little above this neighbourhood.

The savannah is inhabited by a few Macusi Indians who trade with the Ackawois, and traces of them were

found in the pits where they had dug up eggs of the Iguana (*Iguana tuberculata*). In the afternoon when we started I caught a very curious crab which I have reasons for thinking quite new. I do not remember seeing anything similar to it at the British Museum when I was examining their neotropical crustacea; the men of my crew said that they had met with nothing like it in the lower portions of the river. The whole base of the White hill is honeycombed by many holes which contain the nests of the Fisherman bird (*Alcedo torquata*), the Sek-sekysekaru of the Indians; these birds abound here in great quantities. We also saw a fine specimen of the Blue Crane (*Ciconia sp.*) called by the Indians, Hanora, which started up from a spot very close to where we had camped for breakfast.

Shortly after leaving the White hill the river opens out into a fine broad expanse of water, lake-like in aspect, with banks of great beauty and of most varied description: in some places they were composed of green patches of grass on which grew the awarraballi palm in the most graceful clusters; in others the tall trees grew close to the water's edge, their foliage intermingled with the tender leaves of vines and creepers which hang gracefully from their lofty branches. At the end of this broad expanse was an island, opposite to which a creek emptied itself into the river called the Yowacourie creek; this is the same which takes its rise in the savannah at the back of the White hill; the creek waters were a great contrast to those of the river, being very clear, cold, and most refreshing. At its entrance we saw two Ackawois Indians in a woodskin, which were the first of this tribe seen on the expedition;

they seemed to me very timid and fearful, and it was sometime before they would paddle to the side of our boat. We learnt from these indians that Cabbacabouria was one day's journey higher up, and that Captain SIMON and all his men were there, this was all however that we could get from them, they appeared to be very shy, and seemed glad when a favourable opportunity for leaving the boat presented itself. The natural fear and antipathy of the Arawaks to the Ackawois now manifested itself, the Arawaks not only refusing to speak, but even turning their backs to the two strangers ; I already foresaw trouble would come from a mixed crew of these two tribes, which at this stage of the journey seemed to me quite unavoidable. The river now became much more interesting than it had previously been, alternately passing through narrow gorges and wide lake-like sheets of water. In this part it would have been very easy to have lost the way without a pilot as the river spread into innumerable passages most of them being the remains of old channels where in previous years the main stream had coursed along, but which now were only navigable for a few miles, afterwards becoming choked up and impossible to penetrate ; many of these blind passages looked much more like the main river than the real channel and the traveller without a pilot could only find the true path by noticing from which passage the current ran down strongest. We now passed another hill somewhat similar to the White hill but steeper and having a reddish tinge about it ; this place is called the Red hill, the soil consists of white and red sand mixed with clay in which are found imbedded many small quartz pebbles. There is a tradition on the river that gold is to be found in

this neighbourhood, it is also stated that a large nugget was once found by a man accidentally digging a labba out of a hole near the Yowaccourie creek. I should think from the indications given by the soil that gold is to be found here but I should doubt if in much more than infinitesimal quantities, this however could only be settled by absolute experiment, and as I had not the requisite apparatus for washing, it remains an open question still. The Red hill is very steep, in parts being almost perpendicular; it was very unpleasant walking about in consequence of the nests of the large sand wasp mentioned above which infests this part of the river and particularly this hill. I was much struck with the fewness of animals of all kinds. Hitherto I had only seen one large snake crossing the river, both mammals and land and water birds being equally scarce, except at the part of the river mentioned before where the banks were swampy. I had however not remained in these lower reaches collecting, my object being to devote the greater portion of my time to the fauna in the neighbourhood of the falls.

The next day, in the course of the morning we arrived at an Ackawoi settlement called Warramoorie, situated on a hill. I went up to the houses with my assistant but was not accompanied as usual by my Arawks, in consequence I suppose of the antipathy between the two races. The houses were deserted but gave evident signs of having been occupied very recently, for scattered about on the ground, as if hurriedly thrown down were pieces of cassava, grated cassava, calabashes, raw cotton, cotton partly made into thread, and all kinds of other articles: I suspected from these appearances that the men were away in the bush



hunting, and that the women had fled on our approach.

The settlement which consisted of two square houses with V shaped roofs, one open all round, and the other closed by palings, was very pleasantly situated on the hill; all the bush in front of the houses had been cleared away, and its place occupied by cotton, papaw, and cashew trees which grew in great profusion; the papaw trees were much taller than any other I had ever before seen.

After stopping here for some time and no one appearing, we resumed our journey, and soon passed an Ackawoi in a woodskin, who told us that the news of our coming had already reached their settlement, and that a red handkerchief had been placed at the mouth of the creek on which their village was situated in order that we might not miss the way. At 4.30 we arrived at the mouth of a creek and if it had not been for the red handkerchief no person would have dreamt of a settlement being situated on it, for the channel was so obstructed with tacubas that we had some trouble in steering our way with the large boat. After going up for a quarter of a mile, we came to a landing place on which a number of woodskins were drawn up and it was evident that the path to the camp commenced from here. A short walk along this track, brought us to the wretchedest collection of Indian benabs that I have yet seen; there were about twenty small huts, the ground area of each being about 8 feet by 6 feet. Most of them had a framework of four or six poles, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches in diameter which supported a roof of palm thatch so thin as to be scarcely waterproof. For the first time this journey, in an Indian camp we saw a few tame animals running about; there

was a deer, (*Cervus humilis*) a trumpet-bird, (*Psophia crepitans*) a sakkie (*Tanagra sp.*) and an old witch ; all of them with the exception of the trumpet bird looked neglected and ill fed. Most of the women were smeared on the face with annato, some of them only ornamenting the tip of their nose and thus making themselves look very grotesque ; they say that it is very useful in keeping away the mosquitoes and sand flies. After waiting a little time SIMON, the captain of the Indians appeared, clothed only in a very dirty flannel shirt ; he was a strong tall fellow with a rather thin aquiline nose, his complexion was so dark that the thought entered my mind that he was not quite pure Indian, but probably had a touch of African blood. I found him a very decent, kind, civil sort of a man, and disposed to render help in every way, but it struck me that he had really very little authority over his tribe. I told him that I wanted additional hands to take me higher up the river and stated what wages I would give them ; he seemed pleased at the pay and said that he would do his best and consult his young men on the subject letting me know their answer later ; but he was not at all sure that they could go, as all arrangements had already been made for leaving next day and walking across to the Demerara river. Later on, all the rest of the men came in and I was disappointed at seeing that the majority of them were merely youths, there being only one man, about 22 years old, and an old man.

My own men camped on the other side of the creek and were most decidedly frightened so that the only persons who slept in the Ackawois camp were myself and assistant. The Ackawois had invited my crew to come

up and spend the evening in their camp and although there was a good quantity of Piwarrie they still preferred remaining apart. I had been warned by every person I talked to as I journeyed up the river to be on my guard against the thieving propensities of the Ackawois; this caution proved to be correctly given for in the evening when I entered my hammock they all crowded round me and did their best to secrete and carry away the few things I had, viz., my coffee cups, tobacco, pipe and knife, it was therefore necessary to keep a very sharp eye on all these things, for they were not in the slightest degree shy or reserved, and took up everything they could place their hands on. In the course of the evening they did in cold blood a most cruel act; with some trouble they collected all the dogs belonging to the camp and having made a good bright flaming fire put the unfortunate curs, one after the other, right in the middle of the blaze and held them in for a good part of a minute, causing the poor beasts to yell in agony; this they do in order to cleanse their noses and make them quick to follow the scent while hunting. During the night while I was sleeping some Indians stole five pieces of candle from the lamp one after the other.

The next morning on waking, I noticed that the camp looked very deserted, and SIMON, who was somewhat intoxicated, came and asked me for two guns, two tins of powder, one box of caps and a bag of shot. I told him if he asked for anything reasonable that he should have it, but such a demand as that was absurd; after this he went away apparently very offended and said to some of my men that the Buckra was very greedy. On making inquiries I was told that his men had gone over to Demerara, but I did not feel at all sure that this was the case,

so I waited some time and when I saw there was no chance of getting men I resolved to push on as far as we could with the hands at my disposal. The Arawaks were very timid and did not like going higher up the river, they were under the impression that the Ackawois would follow us and do some harm ; and it took a great deal of trouble and persuasion to make them journey on. After a lapse of two hours we came to a hilly place called Immarooney ; this is a spot where the Ackawois used to stay in times gone by, it was now quite deserted ; the houses here were built much better than those at Cabbacabouria, several of them being round with conical shaped roofs. It is opposite to this place that they come to shoot the fish called Himaure (*Erythrinus macrodon*.)

In an old benab I found a large quantity of salt covered up most carefully with leaves, evidently stored up for salting on some future fishing excursion. Their method of fishing is as follows : the Indian peers close to the surface of the water searching the bottom in order to find out the resting places of the Himaure fish ; usually, after a short search he sees one or two concealing themselves among the dead leaves and vegetation growing at the bottom, then taking a steady aim he impales the fish with an arrow ; another man who has been standing in readiness now disables the creature with either a cutlass or a club while it is struggling to make its escape with the arrow, which not unfrequently happens : the fish are usually about three feet long but are sometimes obtained over four feet. During the day's run we came to a gorge the narrowest we had yet met, which could not have been more than 20 yards across, it was difficult for the boat to

get through as a strong stream ran very powerfully. The river banks were now more open and it was much easier to find a good landing than lower down; this night we encamped on the banks of a little creek amongst some morabucquia bush. The whole time that darkness lasted the Indians were in great fear lest the Ackawois should have followed us in order to make a night attack on the camp, most of them including my captain remained awake the greater part of the night stating that they heard strange noises which I could not hear; they also had suspicion that Kenaimas were about and I found it of little avail my telling them that no such things existed.

When we started next day, the bad effect of all this nonsense became apparent; the men were so sleepy that they had hardly strength to pull the boats, and my captain went sound asleep for several hours in the stern, he being under no anxiety in the broad daylight. We now passed through some very narrow reaches, and careful steering was necessary to pilot the boat, without injury to the tent, past the trees which had fallen across the river, and whose dried branches spread out in all directions. After passing a wide lake-like expanse of water said to be infested with cayman, we came to some rocks, the first we had seen, standing up in the bed of the river; the land about this part became very high, and some well-wooded ranges of hill were seen stretching far inland. The men of my crew expressed no little surprise at the big stones as they called them, and I heard afterwards, that they considered all these rocks as possessing evil influences of some kind or other. A short distance higher up we came to a rapid, so small that one or two showers of rain would have obliterated all traces of its

existence; this was the first indication we had had of our approach to the falls of the river. All along this part the bush near the banks has, at some time or other, been ransacked by the Indians for timber; and we continually passed the outlets of tracks over which they had hauled the wood to the water side. Timber might be worked I think profitably, for greenheart, mora, kakerally and bullet trees are to be found in this neighbourhood; and during most seasons of the year there is water enough to float punts down to New Amsterdam. Some time ago, a very fine grant was worked near this part of the river, called Couradounne grant; it yielded, I was told, a great quantity of very good timber, and was only abandoned in consequence of the demands in New Amsterdam not being sufficient to make it pay. We saw that day, at the place we breakfasted, the tracks of a cayman, the reptile doubtless landed here of a night, and probably had his home, consisting of a hole the entrance to which is under the water, not far away, for clinging about the neighbourhood was the rank, musty odour of the animal. A little higher up we came on an animal called a kibbi, or more generally, a coati-mondi, (*Nasua fusca*); it has a snout like a pig, a long bushy tail, and climbs trees as actively as a monkey. The men gave chase to it, and though I wanted to procure it for a specimen, they were unable to effect its capture. The river now shoaled very much and was very plentifully inhabited by large sting rays, locally called Tangaray and Doubourie in the Arawak language; their body is nearly circular, being about two feet in diameter, they have a tail fifteen inches long, on the back of which are sharp protuberances which secrete a poisonous fluid. If by chance any person treads upon this tail while

bathing, or gets a blow from it when the animal is enraged, there is very little hope of recovery. I was told that the Ackawois Indians only know the remedy for the poison, but this I very much doubt. From this spot up to the falls the men must have destroyed daily, at least 20 or 30 of these animals; first, spiking them with a pole with a sharp point, and then hacking the creatures to pieces with a cutlass; in every case they kept the tail, saying it was of use medically, especially being good for tooth ache.

We now came to a large tree stretched right across the river from bank to bank, and we had to wait for two hours before it could be cut in order to proceed. After this we passed the opening to several large lakes, and at the entrance of one of them we camped for the night. This lake, which is the last one met before coming to the falls, is entered by a channel about forty yards wide and a quarter of a mile long; the lake itself is almost a perfect circle of about a mile in diameter, the view from its centre is very unique, there being absolutely nothing in any direction, except the entrance channel, to vary the perfect symmetry of its well-wooded shores. During the night we were visited by a large maipouri (*Tapir americanus*) which ran away with a loud rustling when we went to shoot it; it was clear that our camp was pitched on the road by which the animal was wont to walk nightly to the river.

On the following day when we started, we came upon no less than four trees stretched across the river from bank to bank, with only a few yards interval between each of them; one was a large mora, squaring at least four feet, which would have taken a whole day to cut through; however after a diligent exploration,

we found a channel, so that with very little cutting we were enabled to pass the boat without taking off the tent. The inefficiency of my captain at this portion of the journey was very noticable; he was a young creole devoid of energy and experience; for the last few days he had done scarcely any work beyond lounging in the stern of the boat during daylight, and lolling in his hammock during the night, always conversing with the men in the creole-Dutch, a language which I do not understand. This apathy and neglect of duty, threw a great deal more work on my shoulders than I bargained for; I had to look after both the navigation of the boat, and the giving out of rations, the irksomeness of which anybody who has travelled in the interior will well understand.

We stopped for breakfast at the mouth of a creek which was closed up with sand; here we found recent tiger and maipouri tracks together with many old tracks of otters, waterhaas and deer. This creek on my return I traced for a long way; in the wet season it communicated with the head of the lake which we had started from that morning, so that during the rainy weather there is a water way right through. Close to this creek we found traces of a camp that must have been many years old. Five or six posts which were now quite rotten still remained upright and between these hammocks doubtless had been slung; I should think they had been standing between five and ten years and possibly may have been the remains of one of Mr. BROWN'S camps. We were now about one day's journey from the first falls and I could plainly hear the noise of rushing water; the men stated that they had heard the noise for two days previously, during the stillness of the night.



The following day the noise of water falling was very loud and we pushed on so as to arrive at the first rapids as early as possible, at one time, however, the roaring was loudest on our left hand, the men stated that the river must take a curve but no such being marked on the map I thought the noise came from some other cause than the river falls. I made a note to find out the source from which this sound came as I returned, none of my crew being able to tell me anything at all about this part of the river.

After a pull of two hours or more along a straight south-westerly reach the river became full of rocks and the first rapids were seen in the far distance glistening in the sun. There was so little water now that the boat, with all our care bumped continually against these barely covered rocks, the banks of the river were about 15 feet high and very steep and looked as if they had been worked out by the great rush of water which comes down during the rainy season.

On an island about half a mile below the falls we passed a granite rock roughly in the shape of an equilateral triangle on which several letters were deeply inscribed. At the apex appeared the initials B. T. the letters being placed vertically over one another; close to the left hand side were two large letters I. S. about five inches long with the date 1803 written underneath; in the centre of the stone were inscribed the two sets of initials A. E. and F. H. with the dates 1816 written underneath.

About half a mile above this rock commences the first rapids which consisted at this season of a series of small falls, which are about 50 yards wide and 100 yards long.

As it was my intention to collect above these rapids

I gave orders to make preparations to haul the boat through them which was a very easy task for people who knew any thing about navigating boats through surfy water. To my great surprise the Arawaks refused to go any further and no amount of urging would make them move at all, they even would not camp in the immediate neighbourhood of the falls for they said that "bad spirits would come out of the rocks at night." The same night my captain told me that the men wanted to go back and on talking to them I found that they wished at once to return, also my captain said he wished to go back as he had business to attend to. I learnt afterwards that he was summoned to appear before Mr. CALDER, the River Magistrate, having to answer certain charges in connection with illegal rum selling on crown lands, etc. The disposition of the men was clearly such that if they had not the means of going back they would run away, just as the same river men did to SCHOMBURGK almost at the same part of the river, stealing doubtless one of my boats in the night and perhaps taking with them articles which would be of use to me in my work.

I was at a great disadvantage talking with the crew for only two understood English at all properly so that what I said had to be translated into the creole-Dutch by my captain. When it was clear that I could not get the men to proceed higher up the river and that they were determined to go home I called them up singly and asked each one to remain ; out of all only two consented and these strangely were the two men engaged by myself at Koomaka Downs, I therefore put the canoe at the disposal of the other men who with my captain on the following day returned in it to their

homes. I was thus left at the falls with only my assistant (a young Chinese lad) and two men.

We set to work at once to prepare for collecting, and spent the day overhauling the stores and getting out what ever seemed to be likely to be of any use. To each of the Indians I lent a common gun, giving them ammunition with instructions to shoot all the specimens they could, and tried to make them understand that I also wanted insects, fish, etc. I decided on pursuing the following course, viz., to drop down the river very slowly, remaining in one place for several days and making long excursions into the forest collecting.

We remained at this part of the river for two or three days without any particular incident, travelling in the bush during the early morning in order to shoot birds and resting in the heat of the day to skin what we had procured. The Indians proved themselves to be remarkably bad shots only being able to hit birds when they were very close. On the whole we were successful, killing more birds than we could skin and in addition obtaining some insects.

We then dropped slowly down the river intending to pitch our camp at the spot where the noise of falling water was loudest, which we heard on our left coming up. We had only just started on this little journey when a flock of otters (*Lutra brasiliensis*) sailed into sight but on the approach of the boat they at once dived and we saw them no more. As we drifted down we shot the black curri-curri which are numerous here, a large duck and several small fishing birds, we also saw specimens of the sun bird (*Eurypyga helias*) and the tiger bird (*Ardea tigrinum*). Soon the noise of the rushing waters was heard in our front and in about an hour we arrived at a

point where the river takes a sharp turn, here it became very loud so we landed and at once started through the bush in the direction whence the sound came; after a short half-hour's walk during which we crossed a hill that lay in our path, we came upon a lovely waterfall, situated in the midst of the bush.

Coming from behind a wooded hill, and over a long rocky ridge the water rolls in a foaming mass after which, coursing along a more horizontal but still rocky bed, it makes a series of small but pretty falls, then suddenly descending over a precipitous rock 12 or 15 feet high, in two wide foaming sheets it splashes into a deep basin and flows along a picturesque creek which soon becomes lost to view from the meandering nature of its course. The trees meet overhead but through gaps of foliage gleams of sunshine fell upon the surging water adding to its beauty. The perpetual dampness of the air has caused rare and beautiful ferns to spring from crevasses in the large rocks, at the same time loading the branches of the trees with magnificent vines and creepers; the water was perfectly colourless and very cold evidently having travelled from some lofty savannah far distant from the river.

We made preparations to stop here for some time; on our first excursion we followed up the waterfall creek, it ran at the bottom of a deep narrow gorge or valley, the sides of which were very precipitous; after an hour's difficult walking in consequence of the steepness of the hill, we again heard a noise of falling water which was caused by the stream pouring through a deep rocky gorge. There may possibly be more falls higher up the valley as the bottom was very rocky and inclined at a sharp angle.

From the top of a hill in this district we obtained a fine view of long ridges of high hills stretching far inland in the direction of the Corentyne, and it seemed that the further the hills were from the river the more lofty they become; probably a high table-land savannah lies between this river and the Corentyne and the fresh water creek with the falls takes its rise in it, this however is a mere speculation simply founded on the fact that the creek is pure, not brown bush water, and that the country seems to be higher the further it is from the river. In this part we made many excursions and were very successful, several times falling in with troupes of monkeys, (*Simia appella*) jumping from tree to tree; generally the first intimation of their approach is a loud rustling of leaves caused by the heavy jerking of the branches as they spring from bough to bough, afterwards they become visible, taking huge leaps from tree to tree clinging tightly to the branches with their limbs and tails. We shot several and found them very good eating. It was marvellous how after one or two shots every monkey managed to hide himself successfully and it was necessary to wait for about five minutes until they had recovered their confidence and would begin to make a move before another shot could be made.

Another large monkey called a Quata (*Ateles paniscus*) we also came across, he is a large black fellow very like a man and about four feet high. When we saw him first he was coiled up in a big black ball on the top of a lofty tree, on firing a shot at him, he fell about fifty feet but saved himself from tumbling to the ground by catching hold of a branch, he then jumped from tree to tree travelling at an amazing rate and

although we repeatedly fired at him I do not think one shot took effect for he travelled so fast that there was no time to take aim; he ultimately escaped by crossing a swamp on the top of the lofty trees. The Indians will not shoot this monkey with bow and arrow for they say that the fellow will throw the arrow back with a sure and perfect aim. After returning from the chase of the monkey the Indian quite lost himself and as it was late it seemed as if we should have to pass the night in the bush, but happily I found I had a compass, this enabled us to reach the river which we fortunately struck close to our own camp. Another day while out collecting we saw our only tiger; as one of the men was whistling in order to attract birds, a large fine tiger (*Felis onca*) suddenly climbed up a tree growing about 30 yards off, surveyed our party for two or three seconds then jumped down into the gully of a dry watercourse and made off. My gun was not in my hand at the time and the Indians were too much astonished to shoot, the guns however were only loaded with small shot so that I doubt if we should have secured the fellow even if we had fired. The animal must have been attracted by the whistling and possibly came to see if it was caused by any creature suitable for him to eat. There were innumerable small birds about and it would well repay any naturalist to remain here for a considerable time collecting. As we journeyed down the river from camp to camp, we discovered that it had shoaled considerably, the water having sunk some six or eight inches since we passed up; already we began to experience trouble with the boat, having to get out in order to heave it across the banks, using oars and poles as levers, but as yet we encountered no serious difficulty. At the mouth of a creek where humming birds swarmed

we remained for a few days; at first we could nearly shoot these small creatures as fast as the gun could be charged, in a short time however they almost entirely disappeared, being frightened at the death of their companions. There were seven or eight different varieties, and my assistant says he saw a king humming bird (*Topaza pella*). All around this district many birds were to be obtained. Toucans (*Ramphastos* sp) sun-birds, (*Eurypyga helias*) tiger-birds, (*Ardea tigrinum*) hawks (many varieties), parrots, macaws, together with a host of smaller species. One morning about 5 o'clock, we were surprised by a doe bounding with evident fright across the little creek, through our camp into the bush beyond, having evidently been pursued by one of the tigers which abound here, the tracks of different species of the feline family being found on almost every piece of sand or soft ground. Every night we stopped at this creek one or two very heavy splashes were heard close to its mouth, in addition to those made by the big fish jumping, these the Indians said must be caused by a cayman which had its home in a little swamp close by; this may have been true for the noise was sometimes very loud. On another occasion we found a little creek near to our camp full of nests of the fish hima-mura, (*Erythrinus macrodon*) and PETER the Indian who had a few arrows, cut down a young tree from which he made a very creditable bow. He then began spying closely into the dark creek water, and making a good aim impaled a fish; afterwards he held his arrow as tightly as he could while the other man speared the captive with a sharpened pole and dispatched it with a cutlass. The fish, so easily killed was over 3 feet long and excellent food. They afterwards captured several other fish in the same way

which we salted for later consumption. In our daily excursions we often came across peccary (*Dicotyles torquatus*) and maipouri (*Tapir americanus*) tracks but never were able to see the animals themselves. Once only, on the opposite bank of the river, partly hidden by the thick undergrowth, a large black animal appeared; the Indians said that it was maipouri come for water, but although we shot at and wounded this creature it was able to make good its escape. About this time an accident happened which might have been attended with serious consequences. Our big boat which was rather leaky had a loose plank that the men foolishly kept caulking from the inside; one morning in mid stream an Indian put his weight on this plank causing it to fall out, the water at once entered the boat, but we were enabled to tilt it so as just to get the rent above the surface by everybody standing on the right gunwale; in this way we floated gently to the shore, where we propped the boat up with a couple of oars until the leak was temporarily repaired.

For two days we stayed at the mouth of the creek, where on our journey up we came across the remains of an old camp. I followed the sandy and dried up bed of this watercourse for a long distance and ultimately satisfied myself that it entered the round lake also previously described. The creek split into several different channels which joined together further up, forming splendid roads to penetrate into the bush; now and then while walking along one of these sandy channels we would find a deep hole in which the water had not yet quite evaporated and in nearly every such case a bevy of aquatic birds dispersed at our approach. We shot some large hawks and toucans which were



common here, together with a number of smaller birds. Every morning we heard the cackling noise of the bush turkey, locally called marudi, and in the evening the plaintive whistle of the maam; these birds we never came across, although I tried my best to find them. One evening whilst standing looking at the river I saw a large flock of otters; there must have been thirty of them altogether, they swim like dogs, being totally covered with the exception of the head; directly they caught sight of us all dived and reappeared a very long way off after an interval of about a minute.

We were troubled less than usual on this journey from the insect pests; at times a voracious mosquito called a gallon-nipper bit cruelly, but we decidedly suffered most from bush lice and ticks which swarmed all over our bodies. After a long journey through the forest it was necessary to strip in order to pick these creatures off, which besides being disgusting from their appearance hurt excessively. Ants sometimes worried us but usually during the night; on one occasion our party was aroused by a swarm of large brown ants which stung most viciously, these creatures had to be taken off one by one in order to get rid of them, for on attempting to brush them away they held on savagely with their teeth, at the same time stinging spitefully. In the lower part of the river sand flies swarmed in immense numbers, these insects always make a point of alighting on the eyes and are one of the chief pests which make sore eyes such a dreadful complaint. There is one more pest called the cow fly, the bite of this insect is very painful, wherever it sucks a clot of blood is always found. Chigoes or jiggers did not annoy us, for all the houses we entered were inhabited and I

invariably made a point of wearing socks in them.

All about the upper part of the river we met many kinds of forest trees. The following species I have seen myself:—greenheart, wallaba, kakerally, bullet-tree, paddle-wood, mora, morabally, locust, dakamarballi, silverballi, etaballi, tonka-bean, huboballi, monkey-pot, and some others which have slipped my memory.

We had now two days of really hard work, the river became so shallow that it was with the greatest difficulty we were enabled to get along. The boat continually grounded on sand-banks, and it was necessary that everybody should enter the water in order to heave it across the obstruction; when these banks were of large area the work, performed under a blazing tropical sun, was very exhausting, and several times it seemed as if we should have to wait for the rainy season to lift us off. The last bad shoal we came to was covered with only two or three inches of water; to haul the boat over, a Spanish windlass was constructed by the Indian very dexterously. To make this machine it is necessary to have two upright posts one or two yards apart, two young trees about six or eight inches in diameter are best; then cut two semi-circular horizontal notches in these uprights, in which fit a stout wooden roller joining the two trees like the cross stroke of an H. In the middle of the cross bar cut a notch at right angles to its direction in which fit and tightly lash a strong handle projecting both ways. Then bind a rope firmly attached to your boat to the cross bar and turn it by means of the handle, of course the longer the handle the more powerful will be the effect of the leverage and if the winch is at all well made two men will move by means of it an enormous weight. Modifications of the winch will naturally have to be

devised to suit particular cases. After the last of the dangerously shallow places had been passed, the effects of the over work in the water without shelter from the sun became apparent; we had just landed at the mouth of the circular lake described on the journey up when I was seized with a severe fever, and for one day lay almost unconscious in my hammock. On the second day I was still suffering from the fever and felt very weak, it however left me after repeated and large doses of quinine, but a diarrhæa remained which was very troublesome for some time. I managed to sling a hammock under some palm leaves in the boat and we travelled slowly down the river. I saw for the first time on the journey a fish called perai (*Serrasalmo niger*); he seized the body of a toucan which had been thrown into the river after skinning. This fish which is one of the fiercest and most voracious, makes bathing in deep water almost an impossibility; it is said to be even dangerous to dip a hand in the water for fear of the fingers being bitten off, and stories are numerous which tell of people losing either fingers or toes, or sometimes both from the savage attacks of these creatures. While I was in this state I could not do much collecting, but I soon found myself getting stronger daily; we now went down somewhat faster as I was not so anxious to collect at this part of the river. About this time the following incident occurred which illustrates another way of obtaining fish sometimes practised by the Indians; in a little pond connected with the river by a very shallow opening the men found a number of himaura fish (*Erythrinus macrodon*); they then collected some heavy logs with which they completely barred up the entrance channel; one man now stationed himself on this barrier armed with a cutlass, the other meanwhile vigor-

ously stirred up the fish with a short stout pole in order to frighten them to attempt an escape by leaping the barrier into the river. At first five or six sun-fish jumped the obstruction and two were stunned being struck on the head with a cutlass ; afterwards two himaurea tried the leap and were also struck but managed to escape ; the remainder hid themselves in the bottom among the reeds and stones and could not by any means be dislodged.

One morning as we were landing for breakfast I was on the point of jumping off the stern of the boat ashore, when PETER the Indian called my attention to a very large venomous green snake with white markings ; the men could not tell me the name of it, they said that they had not seen one like it before. The reptile lay curled up on a bough which would have to be shaken each time one of us landed ; it was quite quiet and regarded all our movements with a stony stupid look. I should have liked to have procured the specimen, but there was no possibility of getting the fellow safely, situated as he was, for at the first attempt he would have probably sprung right into the boat. As he blocked up the way of our landing we killed him, much against my will, and the small shots made such havoc of his body, that it was not the slightest use bringing it on as a specimen. As we passed Cabbacabouria we noticed that the woodskins were no longer there, probably Captain SIMON with all his men was at the Demerara River. In three or four days, carried by a strong current we arrived early one morning at Koomaka, and there rested during the remainder of the day.

The next morning PORTER, the half-caste, took me to a charming little creek which opens into the river a short distance below the settlement. The stream, narrow and

winding, travelled through a gloomy arch of splendid foliage ; palms and big-leaved plants revelled on its banks, and veils of creepers fell around in graceful folds, the whole making a lovely picture of tropical verdure and profusion. Every traveller who stops at Koomaka should make it a point of visiting this beautiful spot. In the afternoon after returning to the settlement I took my stores to Maria Henrietta to make preparations for an expedition up the Wieroonie creek.





## PART II.

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**F**OR the expedition up the Wieroonie creek I took only one large corial and three men, who I was told were the steadiest and best pullers throughout the river. To Mr. J. A. GLADSTONE I am indebted for obtaining these hands, and I am bound to say that they fully bore out the character given of them. EDWARD HARTMANN, whom I made captain, is far the best man on the river I met for such a position, being a good puller, cook, and hunter; the names of the other men were LAMBERT SOWERS and CHARLES SOWERS, both very decent men, especially LAMBERT, whom it would be advisable to take on any river expedition. I hired the same canoe which we had taken up the river having it first thoroughly overhauled and mended. I should have preferred a newer one after my previous experience of it, but was unable to procure another large enough to contain the stores; even with this boat we were much too heavily laden and had to be careful not to move about, as the sides were only a very little distance above the surface of the water. At 2 o'clock we started and proceeded down the river to the mouth of the creek, having the tide with us. It was a rather wet journey,

for in some of the river reaches a strong head wind raised up large waves which splashed the water over us in considerable quantities. The canoe also began to leak badly, a weak place in the bow having been missed by the carpenter who repaired it. At frequent intervals we passed fish traps which are thus constructed :—on the part of the shore which is uncovered at low water is built a tight fence in a rectangular shape enclosing about six square feet of ground ; a well fitting door is fixed in the side open to the river ; at low tide when the trap is dry, a quantity of bait is fastened in the inside and the door is left widely open, when the tide has risen it is closed, making captives of all the fish which have been attracted by the bait ; these are then easily secured at the next ebbing of the tide. In about three quarters of an hour we reached the creek, which empties itself into the main river at a place where there is a large bend ; opposite to its mouth which is about 30 yards wide, is an extensive shallow bank caused by the large deposit of sand brought down by its waters. The banks were low and inclined to be swampy, and it seemed to me that nearly every kind of the common palms were to be found here in profusion.

A short quarter of a mile from the mouth of the creek is an old stelling made in the times of slavery, reported to be at least 80 years old and probably 100. It was one of the approaches to an old estate which the men told me was called Barramooroo. I examined this stelling carefully and found it for its great age in good condition. A good deal of trouble was necessary to remove a piece of wood which was said to be kakerally, but this I doubted, for that description of wood could hardly last so long. The bottom of the creek near the landing

place was paved with brick, and it is generally supposed that here was the bathing place of the estate. On leaving this interesting site our boat began to leak very fast and we paddled hard to arrive at our evening camp as soon as possible, and as the boat was becoming dangerously full we stopt at an Arawak village called Matara. This is a large Indian settlement built on the top of a gentle slope, consisting of about twenty or twenty-five well-built houses scattered over a considerable area of ground. We found here a good-sized chapel connected with one of the numerous missionary sects; attached to it was a room where the Clergyman stops during his visits but which in his absence is used as a sort of guest house; in this place I took up my quarters, the men swinging their hammocks in the adjoining meeting house. The soil of the clearing, which was entirely composed of the usual savannah white sand, had been cultivated by the Indians; cashew, seville orange, banana, wild canes for arrow shafts, mangoe and sugar canes being planted in different parts. The place was deserted, only one sickly man being present, the others having started off on a fish-hunting expedition to some distant creek, from which they were not expected to return for at least a week. The next morning we took a walk through the belt of bush which surrounds this village to the savannah over which we wandered for at least five or six miles. The whole of this open tract seems to be traversed by a network of Indian paths which connect together the various settlements existing on or near its borders; three of these trails were pointed out to me starting from the settlement to various places a long way off. Birds abound here in great numbers, especially



on the borders of isolated clumps of bush, but game is very scarce on account of the Indians having over-hunted the country in the immediate neighbourhood of their dwellings. When we came back it was so late in the day that I determined to remain and make another trip to the savannah later on ; we were then more successful for the men shot some marudis and hannaquas which were very acceptable, for fresh meat had been difficult to obtain for some time.

The next day we embarked very early in the morning and found it cold on the water in consequence of a white mist which however soon cleared away. A short distance above the settlement, at a place where the creek takes a sudden bend is a large sheet of water nearly circular in form ; around this big pool seemed a very favorite resting place for birds, for we saw two hawks, five parrots, a trogon, and a quantity of pigeons perched on the neighbouring trees. Shortly after passing the mouth of the Armatani creek the savannah approaches the creek bank, being separated from the water by a belt of bush about twenty yards deep. On the right bank are to be seen the openings of many timber paths down which the Indians haul long logs of wallaba, great quantities of this wood being cut on the creek. At 10 o'clock we passed the entrance of the bush path to the settlement of Marapacka ; it is only two hours journey there by land, but four or five hours by water, in consequence of the winding of the creek. I did not walk along this track, but I was told that it went partly through bush and partly in savannah. A little higher up we came to some rising ground called the Red hill ; it has a red soil hidden with thick bushes and is rather steep ; although not more than thirty feet high, a fine

view over the savannah is obtained from the top. We continually passed remains of Indian benabs which had been erected during wood-cutting or hunting expeditions; while stopping at one of these for breakfast we found a fine piece of kakarally in the neighbouring bush ready to be hauled out. I am surprised that the Indians think it worth while cutting this wood, for they obtain only about 10 or 12 cents per foot for it, which I should think would scarcely repay their trouble. Wallaba is very plentiful everywhere and good grants might be taken in many places, but at this time I do not think that any cutting whatever except by Indians is being carried on in this creek. I noticed this day specimens growing of the following palms: cookerite, tooroo, æta, manacole, awarra but no troolie, also the altibanna; a wild plantain grows in abundance together with the dallibanna, the leaves of which are much used for thatching. Bullet-tree is also found near the creek, ballata at times having been collected in this neighbourhood. The scenery on this creek was of a perfectly different nature to that of the river, being much more sombre and gloomy; the closeness of the banks, covered with lofty trees only allowing the sun for a few hours to shine upon the water. A heavily laden canoe passed, containing Indians of both sexes on their way to Matara in order to be present at the religious meeting which was to take place on the morrow; in the stern sat an old Indian diligently reading a large book, probably a bible, this man I was told always conducted the settlement service in the absence of the minister. We arrived late in the afternoon at Marapacka and first landed at a part of the settlement situated at the foot of a hill; here we found only two houses, both dirty and occupied by large

families of children; the people who were very civil told us to travel half a mile further up the river to another landing where we should find a path which led to the larger part of the settlement situated on the top of a hill. A short paddle further brought us to a good sandy landing-place from which a well-beaten path went up a steep hill; on reaching the summit, we came to a large settlement consisting of about a dozen houses; the inhabitants most hospitably put at our disposal at once their largest and best house, which easily and comfortably contained our whole party. After we had swung the hammocks and rested a little time, more Indians came in laden with the results of a day's hunting. One brought in two marudis and a large labba; another, a fine abouyah or peccary and two acouries, whilst a third had a few large fish, which he had shot with arrows at some spot higher up the creek, they were exceedingly generous and most kindly gave our party a portion of the fresh meat. I afterwards learnt that it is the custom of the Marapacka Indians to devote every Saturday to hunting, and in the evening after returning from the chase, to hold a kind of general reunion, all the people who have been absent cutting timber, returning that night to the settlement; they then make merry, drink piwarri or rum if they can procure it, and dance vigorously to the sound of a fiddle, and return to their work either late on Sunday, or early on Monday morning. During the evening all my men became very intoxicated with piwarri, which our hosts had given to them, consuming large bowls of it until they became ill, then vomiting it up, and recommencing the disgusting operation over again. Some of the men took I should think, enough piwarri

to fill four or five large basins. Here also I saw them make it, and the sight of a nasty old woman sitting by a bowl chewing the cassava in a business like way was enough to make one disgusted with the drink for ever. The next day being Sunday we rested. I took a walk over the whole settlement, and was surprised at the size of the cassava field which they had planted. Here and there in the midst of the clearing were growing little clumps of sugar cane; these canes were not very large in size, but contained a fair amount of juice; as far as I could learn, no attention was ever paid to them. Among the houses of the settlement were planted papaw, banana, soursop and cashew trees. The Indians seem particularly fond of the latter fruit for in nearly all the settlements I stopped at, one or two bushes of it were to be found growing. From this settlement the path to the Demerara River starts,—it takes a man without burden three days to walk across,—and ends on the Demerara River at a place called Seba I think. Several other paths to other settlements on the Ituni creek I was informed also commence from here. On Monday we started to go higher up the creek, which as yet had not sensibly diminished in volume; for some distance above this settlement I did not notice much change in the banks but afterwards they gradually became more and more marshy in their character.

In the midst of a swampy tract surrounded by æta palms, the Caticaboora creek empties its colourless waters, a great contrast to the dark fluid we had been previously travelling on. A little way up this tributary, in places where the bottom was sandy, we could plainly see every mark and stone even though twelve or fifteen feet of water flowed above them. We remained here a short

time in order to shoot some sun-fish, called by the Creoles, lokonarni ; they are about a foot long, four inches high, and excellent eating, being much esteemed by both Indians and Creoles. The men stood up with their bows already prepared and impaled the fish with arrows whenever they approached the surface of the water close to the boat. My crew did not seem very expert in aiming, as they only killed two or three out of about thirty attempts. We fired at a trumpet bird, (*Psophia crepitans*) which fell at some point on the dry land, but were unable to reach the shore to secure the creature in consequence of the thick barrier of mucco-mucco plants growing near the bank. Many years ago a timber grant existed on the Catibaboora and large quantities of wallaba used to be floated down from the creek, it has however been abandoned for a long period, and the channel meanwhile has become so obstructed in parts from the number of trees in the narrow places which have fallen across it, that it would be a very laborious excursion to travel on its waters. Another large creek called the Cooliseraboo joins the Wieroonie in this neighbourhood ; at its entrance it spreads into a shallow lake extending over a large area, bounded by a series of hills in the form of a mighty amphitheatre, the shores in places being lined with graceful clusters of the æta palm. A large number of snipe were flying among the patches of reeds which abounded in every part, so we ran the boat aground in a shallow place and waded out in order to shoot a few for dinner. In the course of half an hour the men obtained all that we required with the addition of a few spurwings.

On this journey I suffered from the effect of the mid-day sun ; the boat was so small that a tent could not be conveniently constructed over it, and all the shade we had

was obtained from an umbrella which was not of much use. The exposure to this heat brought on a kind of intermittent fever, which passed away during the greater part of the day but returned in the cool of the evening continuing the whole night ; this illness remained with me most annoyingly the whole time that I was in the swampy parts of the creek. We passed at various times large stacks of shingles done up in bundles of fifty ; these were made by Indians, and were ready for transportation down the creek. Indians according to all accounts work in a desultory manner ; they leave their settlement at the beginning of the week and squat near the place where they are working, taking with them a large supply of cassava roots and bread ; when they arrive there they usually pass their time as follows :—two of the week days in hunting, two working, and the remainder in idleness, returning to their settlement the following Saturday. This weekly return is I think a speciality of the Marapacka Indians, and probably originated from their desire to attend the Sunday services of some previous missionary. The above account agreed with what I saw, for on more than one occasion we found Indians who had squatted for cutting wood, either hunting or spending the day lolling in their hammocks.

Specimens of the hanora (*Ciconia sp.*) were fairly common in this swampy district, but were difficult to obtain, on account of their swift and lofty flight ; many times we attempted to shoot these birds, but invariably without success. On the muddy creek banks we occasionally met with places where the bush had been trampled down by maipouris, (*Tapir americanus*), which are sometimes found swimming in the creek during the cool of the evening. We remained this night in two

small benabs, infested with chigoes or jiggers, situated a little way from the banks, here the men attempted to catch some fish in the following manner : they cut a few long flexible rods to which hooks, lines, and bait, were attached in the usual manner, the handle of the rod was fastened firmly in the bank, and the upper portion bent considerably, this was held in its constrained position by being lightly caught in a notch cut in a mucco mucco plant. When a fish takes the bait, the rod is jerked out of its temporary fastening and resumes its upright position, lifting the struggling captive completely out of its element. During the evening a number of large beetles attracted by the light of the lamp dashed themselves against the roof and hammocks in the wildest way. In the early morning a troop of baboons visited us and made a howling chorus till the sun rose ; the amount of noise two or three of these creatures can make is extraordinary, all starting and concluding together with perfect precision. Early in the morning the men went down to see what fish were caught ; we had not been successful for although most of the baits had been taken the fish had either struggled and escaped or been devoured by some larger animals.

During the morning's run we passed a place well-known to river people where the hiarri grew in large quantities ; the Indians travel here from long distances in order to obtain the fish poison ; it had been our intention to procure a little for the purpose of catching fish, but the creek was so full of water that there was little chance of using it with effect. Rain must have fallen in large quantities at the creek head, for it was most unusual for the water to be so high except in the rainy season. Every small pond or lake which communicated with the creek had remains of a rough kind

of fence-work erected partly across the opening by Indians on previous fishing excursions ; when the water is tolerably low, they stop up the whole opening so that nothing can escape, and throw the pounded hiarri into the water, thus stupifying the fish which are afterwards easily captured ; numbers of little inlets and pools had been thus treated, but none recently, due to the excessive quantity of water in the creek. This day whilst following a wounded monkey with HARTMANN, the captain, we lost ourselves, and for several hours wandered through the bush completely bewildered ; the creek winds so much that one cannot depend on the sun for finding out the right direction to walk. By good fortune, however we came on an old Indian hunting trail marked only by a twig here and there being broken, following this up, we arrived at the creek and keeping as near as possible to its banks we reached the camp, very tired and worn out. The monkey we chased was a common marmoset (*Midas ursulus*) I think, but I could not get a good view of the animal, and ultimately it escaped.

The main stream now meandered from side to side of a huge swamp which occupied the bottom of a large valley between two distant ranges of wooded hills ; sometimes for more than an hour the sides of the creek would be merely a hedge of reeds growing out of the swamp : at other times the stream flowed at the foot of the hills, when perpetual stoppages had to be made in consequence of the numerous obstructive tacubas. The windings now became so extended that it took a long time to travel between places situated close together. To obtain some information about the neighbouring bush, I ordered two men to walk through it and shoot any specimens or game they came across, whilst I travelled



with the canoe along the winding course of the creek. In a few hours coming to a good place to camp situated at the foot of some high land, we landed, and went into the bush to find a paddle-wood tree, which are common here, in order to strike one of the projecting laths of wood with a heavy club; this is a method of signalling used on the river, for the tree gives out a deep vibrating sonorous sound when struck, which travels for a long distance. After searching a little time we came across one and struck it with a heavy baulk of wood several times; a short interval having elapsed a faint report of a gun was heard so far off that only the experienced ear of the bushman was able to perceive it; plainly showing that the deep musical note of the tree was carried quite as far as the loud report of the gun. In about three quarters of an hour the men came in, having been guided by the sound from the tree, bringing with them a large land turtle and two bush turkeys (*Penelope sp.*) or marudis.

We travelled for some days more up the creek, but the journey was of little special interest; the whole time our course lay through large swamps in which we twisted and turned in a most eccentric manner. Every day some portion of our time was spent in walking through the bush. On one of these occasions we came close to a party of Indians, who turned out to be Ackawois out hunting; they had crossed the savannah from the Demerara river, game being more abundant in this district. We were now so far up the creek that one day's journey would have easily carried us to the Demerara, and if food had lasted out, I intended to have walked over. Animals were exceedingly plentiful; on several occasions the men saw specimens of the maipouri (*Tapir americanus*) and bush hog,

(*Dicotyles torquatus*) ; these creatures had however been hunted so often that at the slightest noise they ran far away. Bush turkeys, duraquaras and acouries, were brought in every day and barbacotted (smoked) over the camp fire during the night so as to preserve them. One day we were almost driven to strike our camp, for a column of the yackman or hunting ants walked right across it, and nothing would induce them to turn from their path ; their bite is so painful that it is impossible to put up with it, the very dog yelping when he received a nip ; at last after trying all kinds of devices, we saturated the ground in the direction they came from with paraffin, which fortunately freed us from their attacks.

The return journey was marked with little incident ; having a strong current we came back in much less time than we travelled up. At Marapacka I saw old RICHARD, who is a good-tempered Indian with a thoughtful, pleasing face and a rather stout body ; he is looked up to by all as the head of the settlement. Most of the younger days of his life were spent in the service of a missionary on the Demerara River, who taught him to read and write. We found him swinging in his hammock with an open bible in his hands, which I suspected was done for our benefit, and he larded his conversation with many religious expressions. However, this was the first Indian I had met who seemed to have some idea of what was good for his race ; for while we were talking about his men he said, that in future, instead of allowing themselves to be, as formerly, in debt to the traders, they were going to take their wood and shingles in a big boat to New Amsterdam, where they could sell them for much more money, and all things wanted by his people could be bought at

reasonable rates during the same visit. Owing to his influence his men had now very little more wood to give the Portuguese as payment, and then "if God willed it, they would be free." The old fellow, however, was not above taking a large schnapp of rum, and when we were leaving, came to the waterside and asked for a parting drink. He was the only man in the settlement this day, the others being away in the bush working at various places, either squaring timber or making shingles.

These Marapacka Indians seem to have shifted the position of their settlement considerably in past years. We found on the banks of the creek, three different places where the village had previously been built, one of these sites being situated at the furthestmost spot we reached; there may be more places higher up but the Indians themselves did not know of any. I asked old RICHARD if he had any thoughts of ever moving; he replied that he had built the present settlement and it was his wish to die in it.

Matara was all life and bustle when we arrived, the men having returned from their fishing excursion in our absence; they had been unsuccessful and had caught nothing, for the creek they had visited was much too full of water to use hiarri. One could not help noticing the fact that the whole tribe consisted of young men, only one middle aged man, the one we met on our journey up being among them; on this subject however I intend to say a few words further on. We took up our old quarters in the room attached to the meeting-house and starting early next morning arrived at Maria Henrietta shortly after mid-day.

Before returning to Georgetown I remained some days at this place which is pleasantly situated and very

healthy, a great part of the old estate had at some period been recleared and the bush, due to the nature of the soil, had not grown so densely again as usual, so that it was possible to wander over a large tract of land interspersed in places with thick copses of tangled bush. In early morning at the right season many birds with brilliant plumage fly about from branch to branch among the wooded clumps, at the same time large flocks of parrots wheel above uttering their harsh unpleasant cries, and many pigeons and rice birds (*Cassicus niger*) settle upon the upper limbs of the taller trees. I was informed with regard to the parrots that the same kind only visit this locality for a short season, their place being then taken by a new species which in its turn quickly disappears, giving way to another variety, and so on ; this statement was certainly confirmed by what I saw during the different times I was here, for no less than three different species visited the locality, only one kind appearing at a time. The pigeons and rice birds were easy to obtain and several times in the course of half an hour we shot enough to make a good dish for breakfast. It is surprising with so much good food and so easily procurable that the river people are content to live upon an almost vegetable diet, hardly making an attempt to procure any kind of flesh whatever.

This is the most populous district of the upper inhabited portion of the river, numerous families living in the neighbourhood, the picturesque houses and open benabs being in such numbers as almost to constitute a village. Many of the residents are direct descendants of the proprietors of the old Dutch estates and in consequence possess large holdings of land. These extensive properties which are now for the most part covered

with bush, are not made much use of by the owners, usually only a small portion of the ground being cleared in order to grow a few provisions for their own use. Of this style of cultivation, however, a fuller description will be found later on. The only school on the river is situated here; it is held in a long low wooden building near to the water side; about fifteen or twenty children of both sexes attend, but the numbers are subject to great variation as the parents if they have any field work to do invariably take their offspring to help in the labour. All the competent people I spoke to on the subject said that these river children never would receive any education until there were some means of enforcing their regular school attendance,—an opinion which I heartily endorse.

On one occasion I crossed over the river to Pln. *Landsroon*, where two cocoa estates, which will be described later on, exist. Mr. REID, an American, who owns one, devoted a day to showing me over the back of his property. Behind the portion he has cultivated exists a swamp about half a mile wide, with a path constructed of logs running right across; this place is full of snakes, and although I saw only two during the whole day, I was assured, that at times they swarm. During our walk we came on a large flock of Coatis (*Nasua fusca*) that seemed quite tame, simply running up to the top of a low tree on our near approach.

At the back of this swamp a series of low wooded downs commence, which are covered with a large variety of timber, many trees being of the hard wood kind suitable for burning to make charcoal or for furniture purposes. Over a portion of these downs, but of what extent I know not, is a good black mould consisting of decayed vegetable

matter, clay and sand in which are imbedded a few nodules of ironstone ; in this soil it seemed to me almost every description of tropical produce could be reared. Whilst roaming about this bush we came on a series of parallel drains the existence of which the present owner was ignorant ; these were so perfect still that they merely required to be cleaned out to be used again, and evidently were the remains of part of the old Dutch estate which had existed in former years. Beyond this thick belt of bush which extends for about two miles the savannah is reached and the dark ground is again replaced by the usual white sand so prevalent throughout this river. The hilly portion struck me as being eminently suitable for cultivation, for little or no drainage would be necessary due to the natural slope of the hills, and the soil is far better than that which is usually met with near the river.

The following list of poisonous snakes was given to me during the time I was on the river ; I doubt if it is very correct, but on the whole I think it worth putting on record :—bushmaster (*Crotalus mutus*) ; labarria (*Bothrops atrox*) ; rattle snake (*Crotalus horridus*) ; parrot snake (*Bothrops bilineatus*) ; guana snake (*Scytale sp. ?*) ; coreaka snake ; llana snake, the colour of which is stated to be jet black ; koomaka snake, so named from living in holes in old koomaka (silk cotton) trees and said to be very venomous ; morrabanna snake, (one of these killed a man in a settlement close to Koomaka downs during one of my visits to that place) ; imoorabanna snake ; uaru snake, the neck is asserted to swell when the animal is enraged ; and the himoora snake, which is an inhabitant of the water and is stated to sometimes bite the hands of paddlers,—it is very venomous. I was certainly struck with the number of people who had been bitten by venomous

snakes that we came across, but the inhabitants do not consider a man is in much danger from a snake-bite if he can be attended to within an hour or so, and from all accounts they seem to be acquainted with really excellent remedies which are obtained from various wild plants.





### PART III.

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**M**ANY legends and traditions are believed in by both Creoles\* and Indians; already one or two have been mentioned, such as that held about Ackawois doing murder for hire, and rocks and strange places being haunted by spirits who have power to do injury, it would therefore perhaps be as well for me to narrate what others I came across during my journey. A great number of the inhabitants believe in the existence of a river horse, some of them going so far as to say that they have actually seen it swimming and heard it neigh. Mr. J. A. GLADSTONE happening to be one of these fortunate people described it to me as follows. The head, neck, mane and fore legs were very similar to those of a horse, the nostrils however were closed with a valve and the eyes very large. This was all he could tell me as the creature dived soon after he saw it and nobody I came across could describe the tail portion. I found as a rule that it was, usually, the idlest and most boasting fellows who professed to

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\* I apply the term Creole to people born on the river who are not Indians.



have seen this creature, the steadier men although believing in its existence, had as a rule never come across it. For my own part I have no doubt that the whole story has arisen from the rather rare appearance of the Manatee, (*Manatus americanus*) which sometimes comes up the river from the sea in search of food. The snout of this creature might easily be mistaken for that of a horse, and the valvevular nostrils of Mr. GLADSTONE'S account, coincide exactly with the description of this animal.

There are some strange beliefs about trees held by many Indians and Creoles ; the following being two of them :—that the koomaka (silk cotton) tree changes its place during the night, and that if a person cuts the dakama-balli\* tree, some misfortune will happen to him : this second one is very firmly believed in, few Indians or Creoles ever dream of touching this tree.

Rocks and strange looking localities are often considered to be the abode of spirits, and at such places it is frequently difficult to make the men land ; the water is also supposed to be the abode of supernatural beings or devils, and a creature called a water mama in all respects similar to our mermaid. As an illustration of this belief SIMON the captain of the Ackawois said to my captain when he thought his men would go with me that he would " sit at the bow of the boat and smoke his winah (cigarette) in order to blow away the water spirits, jumbies and caymans, so that the boat might proceed on her journey safely." This he was able to perform in his capacity of peaman.

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\* The name of the tree has become erased in my note book so that I have added it from memory, I am not absolutely certain that it is correct.

There is a tradition on the river that the parts of the bush remote from the banks are inhabited by a set of wild men much taller than ordinary mortals. One story which was told to me by several different people, relates how an Indian out hunting was captured by one of these people, who took him a prisoner to their village situated beyond the top of the Wickie creek ; this man ultimately escaped, and after great hardships and privations returned to his house. During one of the nights that I stopped close to the Berbice rapids we heard a strange shouting noise, due, I believe, to a kind of frog ; the Indians said it was the noise of the wild men hunting. I do not know what could have been the foundation of this legend, but it is very universally spread over the river, Creoles, Arowaks and Ackawois believing it.

The Indians have either great fear or reverence for the cayman, and on no account will injure or destroy one. Several instances of this were related to me by trustworthy people. Once a well-known river man shot a specimen in one of the upper lakes, the men with him became anxious and frightened, and left the place as fast as they could pull.

Nearly every Indian settlement has a peaiman still. It is sometimes difficult to find them out as they are very reserved, especially before English people, since the teaching of the missionaries. I heard of at least four whilst I was on the river and two of them were pointed out to me. At Ahwiemah a tall big man, not quite a pure Indian, is peaiman, but he will not acknowledge this before anybody but his believers ; it is stated that he has been offered two gallons of rum to show his gobie (an ornamental calabash with a handle and string of feathers which the peaiman uses), but he firmly refused.

I gleaned the following information about peaimen during my stay on the river. In order to become a peaiman or magic man it is necessary to be shut up in a small hut, completely excluded from the outside world, for a long period, usually for about a month I inferred, and while thus caged up, only a small piece of cassava may be taken for food and great quantities of water in which tobacco has been steeped for drink ; other initiative rites consist in taking antidotes to all poisons (and cures for various kinds of sickness?) so that the breath of a peaiman will possess ever after healing virtues, and in becoming acquainted with the healing herbs and the rough medicine of the tribe ; this last in my opinion is far the most useful part of the education. I was also told that a good peaiman has considerable ventriloquistic powers and that during his ceremonies when he is speaking and receiving answers from the spirits of the various animals, the replies seem to come in various tones from different parts of the neighbouring bush. These few facts were all that I could learn on the subject and would want further confirmation before accepting them as correct ; some of the information was obtained for me by my Captain from our Arowak crew as we journeyed along.

Every Indian child that is born is taken at some period to the peaiman who gives it a name ; if the child thrives everything is well, but if the child becomes sickly it is brought back to the peaiman the name being considered not to suit the child ; a new name is then given and if it still continues not to get on satisfactorily it is changed again, and so on. These names are usually taken from some animal or plant, thus the Indian name of one of my men was EUREUREKO, which means Tobacco. I was also told that the Indians very rarely called each

other by their native names much preferring their European ones. In old times after rendering a service the peaiman could claim a daughter as payment and he was thus enabled to bestow her as a bride on any young man he chose, but now he has to be contented with more moderate payments, often receiving a bottle of rum, or a few fowls, and such like things, so that he has greatly fallen from his former influential position.

Several people told me that it was considered very unlucky if you were passing any place where a peaiman was performing a ceremony to remain near the spot, and Mr. J. A. GLADSTONE narrated the following instance of this kind which occurred to him :—once as he was travelling along a creek with a few Indians for a crew he heard a great noise and shouting coming from a settlement situated on the bank ; wishing to find out what was the reason of the uproar he ordered his pullers to land, this they refused to do as they said the sound came from a peaiman, and that it was unlucky to remain ; however after a great deal of persuasion they landed him, going away far out of earshot themselves. Directly the peaiman saw a stranger walking to the settlement he at once stopped and hid all his ceremonial paraphernalia as quickly as possible.

Piwarri feasts are held for a variety of reasons, the commonest being for clearing bush from the land, If a person wishes to clear a portion of his land he makes a very large brew of piwarri which he notifies to all his friends and neighbours, at the same time sending a message that he wishes them to assist in cutting bush on a certain day ; when this time comes, all the people assemble at the place and are provided with a breakfast, after which they set to work and usually by evening have

finished making the required clearing, then the piwarri is given as payment and all set to work on it not ceasing until every drop is finished. It was a feast of this description that took place at Koomaka the night I left and on that occasion in the frenzy of drunkenness a black man was dangerously stabbed. When the husband of a woman has died and she intends marrying another man, the following ceremony is held:—the woman is placed in the midst of the settlement and a great jar of piwarri is poured over her, then she is taken to the waterside and the remains of the fluid washed from her hair and body, after which she is supposed to be cleansed from her former husband and is now at liberty to marry again, a great feast is then held to commemorate the event. A marriage or death is made an excuse for a drinking feast and others are often held, sometimes for no other reason than that the people would like to celebrate one.

The Arawak Indians dwelling on the river are sadly changed; it is a melancholy sight to see an ancient race losing all its characteristic traits, forgetting the legends of its forefathers, and turning to the so-called civilization of the lowest colonial classes, but this is clearly what is taking place and it is not difficult to find the reason of the change. There are about half a dozen hucksters who trade with the Indian settlements on the river, they own large plank boats which are stocked with salt fish, salt pork, biscuits, flour, sugar, cheap finery, etc., these goods they sell to the Indians at four or five times the ordinary town prices for credit. The buyers who are hopelessly in debt, pay with the shingles and timber that they are constantly preparing. The amounts owed are

invariably so large that it would take a long time of continuous labour to pay them off, nor do the traders want this, their aim being to keep the Indian deeply involved so as to have a legal hold over him and by this means compel him to devote his labour to supplying them with a continuous stream of shingles and timber.

The effect of this system is as follows. The Indian now trusts much more for his living to the huckstering boat, than, as in former times, on hunting and cultivation; for the greater part of the week he lolls in his hammock, and when he does stir out, instead of trying to procure his meat by the chase it is usually for the purpose of cutting wood or making shingles. This traffic brings him into communication with some of the lowest people and very speedily debases his character.

The woodcutting is quite foreign to Indian nature, and does great harm to the crown lands. In the neighbourhood of the river banks, for miles above Koomaka, immense numbers of good young trees are cut down whilst the old giants which must soon fall are left standing, thus denuding the forest of the new trees which are springing up to take the place of the old. Grants I was told in many parts of the river are not worth taking out in consequence of the younger growths having been removed, the timber obtained from the older trees not being sufficient to return a profit. It seems to me that the destruction will go on so long as this credit system remains in vogue, for the Indian is usually heavily in debt to four or five traders and in consequence he becomes their labourer being forced to abandon his old mode of living in order to obtain shingles and wood as payment for the debts he has incurred.

Two plans occurred to me while on the river which might possibly mitigate these evils. The first,—to restrict a certain portion of land for the purposes of cutting timber, to the Indians living in one district, and making it necessary for them to clear entirely this grant, of both large and small trees before being allowed to cut elsewhere ; the second,—to restrict the amount of debt which a trader or other person might legally claim from an Indian, to \$5. The hucksters then would have no inducement to involve the Indians in debt, and they naturally would be much freer men not being so hampered with liabilities which would have continually to be liquidated by cutting timber.

In all business transactions Indians are shamefully treated, and it is I think very unlikely for a man to become honest and industrious when he is cheated continually by greedy unprincipled men. An instance of this was related to me by two Indians at Matara on my return from the Wieroonie creek. A Portuguese trader came to their camp and asked them to prepare a large quantity of wallaba shingles, at the same time stating that he was willing to pay eight pence in money for each bundle on delivery. The Indians agreed to this, made the shingles and brought them to his store, the trader now cajoled them, saying that money was scarce and he could only pay at the rate of a sixpence a bundle, and with reluctance this was agreed to ; however, when it came to the actual payment he refused to give money, stating they must take goods from his shop as payment ; this they ultimately had to do, and as a climax to the whole transaction he handed as payment a piece of cloth the value of which gave about 2d. for each of the shingle bundles. This story may have been a

little exaggerated but certainly not much for I heard on all sides Indians condemning the traders as robbers and cheats. Other Indians at Matara and Marapacka also spoke about this particular man with great bitterness, one of them saying that if he had a gun he would shoot him; he had been robbed in a somewhat similar manner being promised money but being paid with goods of very inferior value.

It is a well known fact that the river Indians are rapidly decreasing. In settlements where twenty years ago fifty or sixty formerly existed, nine or ten are only to be met with now. At first I thought that migration to some other district might explain this large decrease but I was assured by everybody that it was not so but that the race was simply dying out and becoming extinct. I afterwards learnt that in many cases death took place through actual starvation which usually happened in this wise. Many Indians, since the hucksters have traded on the river, left the big settlements and squatted alone, gaining their living by cultivating a field and cutting timber which they barter with the traders for necessaries. It not unfrequently happens that an Indian thus situated falls sick and is incapacitated from going to fetch provisions from his field; living all alone he has no one to send out; perhaps a little help may be rendered by his neighbours but they are probably some distance off having their own business to attend to, and even if they are near by, too apathetic to give much help; if he now gets worse all the stock of food he has becomes exhausted, he is so weak that he can procure no more, no person assists him and he dies literally of starvation. Cases are very numerous where this has happened, and there seems to be no remedy



except to induce the Indians to abandon wood-cutting, live in a large settlement and take to their old agricultural life. The Rev. Mr. MITTELHOLZER has done this with some of the Indians on the Ituni creek, the result is that this is the only settlement which is increasing in population ; the Indians there are also gaining a little money from the yams and other field produce that they have forwarded to New Amsterdam.

In general each creole settler, once a year, plants what is called a field ; he commences by clearing about two acres of bush from off his own land, usually leaving the trunks of the larger trees upon the ground, as they are too unwieldy to be easily hauled away or burnt. He now either plants corn alone or corn and buck yams ; if it is corn alone, the field is never touched until it is time to gather the crop ; but if buck yams are planted as well, it is weeded generally once. The owners of the fields account for this negligence by the fact that they can not obtain any labour for weeding, and this I believe to be the case ; but surely such a state of affairs ought to incite them to work in their fields which they very seldom seem to do.

The following evils arise from this slothfulness : the crops are much smaller than they should be, and it not unfrequently happens that the weeds and insects totally destroy the whole ; the field, never having been weeded, is so overgrown with thick low bush that it is easier to cut another field from a new place than to prepare the old for the next sowing ; and finally this continual clearing and letting run to waste, covers vast quantities of valuable land close to the river with a worthless dense undergrowth, which is now three or four times more difficult and expensive to clear than

before, and naturally its value becomes much deteriorated. There seems no question that while the cultivation of the river lands remains in the hands of these unambitious settlers, whose sole object is to obtain from the land with the minimum amount of labour just sufficient food to keep them and their families alive, there is no chance of a good wholesome trade of any kind being developed.

The soil of the river is capable of producing corn, ginger, plantain, yam, cassava, cocoa, ochroes, tannia, vanilla, coffee, cotton, tobacco, tonka bean, pine apples, sweet potatoes, melons, cucumbers, pumpkins, and in places I think sugar cane, but as yet only corn, plantains, and yams are at all seriously cultivated.

In two or three places attempts are being made to cultivate cocoa. I examined three of these estates, two of which are at Pln. Landscroon being owned respectively by a Portuguese and an American. The estates at Landscroon seemed doing very fairly, especially the one belonging to the Portuguese, the other looked promising, but the proprietor was struggling with the want of capital. I was shown some trees said to be only two years old which were already five feet high, but the average height of plants of that age seemed to be about two feet six inches.

The process of cultivation carried on by these people is as follows: the seeds are first planted in a shady spot of prepared ground called a nursery. After an interval of six or eight months, by which time the plants should be two feet high, they are transferred to the field, an operation that is better done at the commencement of the rainy weather. On each side of the young growths, cassava bushes are planted for the sake of the shade

and when the cocoa becomes taller, plantain trees take their place. At fairly close intervals over the whole field, slips of the sand-koker tree are set, which grow rapidly and ultimately give the requisite shade that the fully grown cocoa plants require.

I was told that the sand koker tree has the following disadvantages, it produces nothing of any commercial value and in November, when shade is most wanted it drops its leaves. It has been suggested to use the tonka bean tree which gives an ample shade, besides rendering a constant source of income from its valuable seeds.

The cultivation of tobacco, which during the occupation of the Dutch was carried on to a considerable extent, large quantities being then exported from this river, was again attempted recently. I hear that many of the plants were in very fine condition, but for some reason or other which I do not know, the enterprise was abandoned.

One great difficulty that has to be contended with in any enterprise on this river, is that of procuring reliable labourers; the river people are not to be depended on; both Creoles and Indians require an advance of money before they will think of working, and even after receiving this, many of them break their contract, by not coming to the work, while those that do, remain only for a few days consecutively. It is therefore necessary to bring labourers from other parts; the American planter at Landscreon has done this, he has about eight or nine East Indians living on his land, and he states that he obtains a far greater amount of work from them at a greatly reduced expenditure of money than from the river people whom he employed at starting.

There are a few people who rear cattle, dwelling on the river; their beasts graze in the bush and on patches of savannah close to their houses. All the cattle I ever saw, with the exception of those belonging to Mr. DALGETY at Bartica, were merely skin and bone; food is rarely if ever given to the animals, and they are expected to provide for themselves from the mora seeds and rough coarse grass which commonly grows in the open spaces near the river. The owners lose them largely by tigers, this loss, however, is not to be surprised at as they do not take any steps to defend their animals. In order to keep the cattle properly they should be taught to return home nightly at the sound of a horn, and be placed in a corral or pen; this plan is adopted in Venezuela, but the breeders are so careless here that they do not see their stock for very long periods. An old frequenter of the river told me of an instance of cattle recovered after being lost for four or five years. The large tracts of savannah land close to the river would no doubt rear immense herds but it would first be necessary to burn down the existing herbage and plant a much better quality of grass.

Before finishing this account I wish to give my hearty thanks to Mr. HARCOURT, the river Commissary, Captain TODD of the colonial steamer, and Mr. J. W. GLADSTONE of Maria Henrietta. All these gentlemen rendered to me most valuable services and did every thing that they were able to make the expedition a success.

I left for Georgetown firmly convinced that while the soil remains in the hands of the present occupiers whose only ambition is to gain sufficient from the ground to live, a healthy prosperous trade can never be established.

If however in future years new men with energy and capital settle on this river all will be changed ; the land cleared, drained and properly looked after will yield abundant harvests ; we may then expect to see as in former years large ships floating on its waters, laden with rich cargoes of the varied and valued products that can be found and grown upon the banks of the Berbice river.



## APPENDIX.

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WHILST I was engaged writing out my account of the Berbice Expedition a friend suggested to me that it would be useful to future travellers to state the rate of wages usually paid to the men, the proper rations to serve out to them, and give a list of articles that it is desirable to take on a long expedition.

The pay of each ordinary puller is 2s. a day, rations being given in addition, the captain or headman of the crew usually receiving 3s.; if, however, the boat has to pass through many falls, and the captain is a well-known, reliable man his pay may be increased to 3s. 6d. or 4s. On the Corentyne wages are much lower than on other rivers, men sometimes working for 1s.; the usual pay, however, is 1s. 4d., the rations, of course, being found. For short trips it is often more convenient to advance the men a certain quantity of money and let them buy their own food, and in this case it is usual to pay the men 8d. per diem more than when food is found. With regard to rations: the first thing in the morning each man should receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  cake of cassava bread, or 2 pilot biscuits, or 8 crackers and 2 oz. muscovado sugar. For breakfast each should receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. salt fish, 2 oz. salt meat (pork or beef)  $\frac{3}{4}$  pint rice or  $\frac{1}{2}$  large cake of cassava bread. For dinner the same rations should be given out, but in place of the rice or cassava 1 pint of flour may be substituted. In the evening just before sleeping a moderate schnapp of rum may be given, this the men, although they have no claim to it, usually expect; in order to give a reward when the men have worked particularly well,  $\frac{1}{2}$  leaf of common black tobacco may also be added. To save trouble and inconvenience, rations should be given out only once a day to the captain, who should be made responsible for the others receiving their respective portions.

Every traveller must make his own choice about the food he takes for himself, but he should on no account start scantily provided, depending on his gun to make up the deficiency. Such articles as tinned meats, corned meats, hams, &c., are the best to carry. A common error is often made by persons taking a rifle; it is scarcely, if ever, required. The animals in the forest are as a rule, small and timid; the jaguar, our largest, and presumably, fiercest representative of the feline race, invariably retreating at the approach of man. Snakes are the most formidable

## ii.

but are rarely met, and they are best destroyed with either a stick or gun. A good breech-loading gun should always be taken together with B.B., No. 2, and No. 6 shot ; this will be found sufficient for every thing in the way of sport ; for birdskins, No. 10 and No. 12 shot should be taken, the cartridges being lightly rammed. Canvas shoes are the most serviceable for walking, and can always be washed without spoiling ; several pairs should be taken together with a broad-brimmed hat and a large umbrella. Below will be found a list of articles which should always be included in the equipment :—

### MISCELLANEOUS.

Axe.	Long tarred rope.	String (various sizes.)
Cutlass, (several).	do. Manilla do.	Vaseline for Guns.
Jack Knife.	Copper wire.	Rangoon Oil, do.
Hammer.	Iron wire.	Sweet Oil.
Chisel.	Sheet tin (small piece).	Lamp (Kerosine Oil).
Pincers.	do. Copper do.	do. (Candle).
Wirenippers.	do. Lead do.	Kerosine Oil, (in tin).
French nails, (various sizes).	Putty (small quantity).	Candles.
Tenpenny nails.	Red Lead, do. do.	Fish Hooks.
Pulleys.	Tar (small quantity).	Fishing Lines.
	Oakum, 10 lbs.	

### COOKING.

Small coal pot.	Small Skillet.	Ladle.
Large Skillet.	Saucepan.	Tin basin.

### MEDICINE.

Catechu.	Sticking Plaister.	Blue Pills.
Laudanum.	Friars' Balsam.	Purgative medicines.
Quinine.		















